

WASHINGTON, DC-Citing, "A need to keep a close watch on taxpayer dollars," Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) today announced he was cosponsoring two bills requiring Congress to exercise its constitutional responsibility of executive-branch oversight; HR 841 and HR 5315.

HR 841 mandates hearings when the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) raises a red flag over an agency's accounting practice and HR 5315, The Accountability in Government Act of 2006, requires cabinet secretaries to face reconfirmation by the Senate if their agency cannot perform a clean audit.

"These are both instrumental pieces of legislation that work towards higher fiscal accountability," Costa declared. He urged his colleagues in Congress to ask more questions about the Bush Administration's irresponsible fiscal policies. "American taxpayers deserve to know how their money is being spent by the Administration," Costa pointed out.

The GAO reports that 19 of 24 federal agencies are not in compliance with all federal accounting audit standards and cannot fully explain how they have spent taxpayer money appropriated by Congress. "Nobody would run a household or business this recklessly, but that's how Washington is being run," the Fresno lawmaker noted.

"Future generations will have to pay back, with interest, the money the federal government is borrowing from other countries due to this fiscal recklessness," Costa continued. "As a result record-high budget deficits four years in a row, the federal debt has ballooned to \$8.3 trillion; much of which is borrowed from foreign countries."

Inspectors General in each federal agency complete regular reports identifying cases of fraud, waste and abuse within their agencies. "Their findings, however, are often ignored by their own agencies and an Administration-compliant Congress," stated Costa.

"Together these two pieces of legislation are key in the effort to maintain accountability," Costa concluded.

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A summary and contact information for HR 841 and HR 5315 is contained in the attached PDF file.